

**John 8: 21-30; “The Lord Jesus Going Away”, Sermon # 52 in the series –  
“That All May Honor the Son”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on  
August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in the Morning Worship Service.**

When the Lord Jesus said that He was going to go away, those listening to Him did not understand, not even His closest disciples. And so it is important for us, at this point, as we enter into the narrative, that we understand that there were two groups of people who were listening to Him. There were those who were listening who did not believe in Him, and then there were those who were His closest disciples, who had already savingly believed in Him, except for Judas. But further, we should understand, that as Jesus spoke these words, there would be many Jews who would believe in Him that day, as it says in verse 30, because of these words which He spoke to them. And so, for our being able to understand what Jesus is saying, here in the context, it will be good for us to think together about the implications of what Jesus meant when He said – “I am going away”. What Jesus meant was that He was going to lay down His life on the cross for sinners, in not too long a time. And after His death, He would rise again and He would return triumphant to heaven, from whence He had come, and from whence He had been sent. That is what He meant by His saying – “I am going away”.

And so what I want to do with this statement at this hour, is to show you the uniqueness of our Savior so that you will trust in Him all the more as you get older and contemplate your own leaving this life; your own going away. For the Lord Jesus Christ is well able to save you from all of your sins and bring you to heaven if you will believe certain things that He has said, about Himself and His Father, which are true. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – You should believe that the Lord Jesus came from above; from the Father, and that you are of this world. 2<sup>nd</sup> – You should believe that the Lord Jesus always spoke from the Father, and did nothing from Himself. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – You should believe that He always did those things that pleased the Father, which things, you also should attempt to do, by His grace. If you believe these things you will be believing in Jesus as He really is. And you will find that the way that you live your Christian life, that is to God’s glory, will be often influenced for good by your reminding yourself of these truths.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – You should believe that Jesus came from above; from the Father, and that you are of this world.** (verses 21-24)

Verses 21 and 22 say – “Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin.’ “Where I go you cannot come.” “So the Jews said, ‘Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come?’” Now it is evident that those who said these last words were unbelievers looking for Jesus to say anything that would make Him look foolish; anything that they could lay hold of, in His speech, which would prove to them that He was not from God. He had already told them once before in John 7: 33, at the time of the Feast – “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.” “You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.” Sometimes we can be told time and time again, the truth about Jesus, and still not understand. And the reason for this is, because we are by nature spiritually blind, and we think that He was just a man like ourselves. We do not realize that Jesus came from heaven above. He came because God sent Him; He the One who had always been with the Father before His Incarnation.

I want you to see the utter sinfulness of these men who were so critical of the pure and perfect Jesus. There was, and there is, a holy uniqueness in the Person of the Son of God, in that everything that He said. For what He said, was perfectly true without any falsehood. All that He suffered at the hands of sinful men, and all that they would say and do to Him, was planned out for Him by His Father. His experience of being despised by men and all of this rejection from those who should have spoken reverently and humbly to Him, these things were explicitly planned for Him by His Father as a part of the sufferings that He would endure on behalf of sinners. The Lord

Jesus, when He began His ministry to Israel, knew that all this hateful resistance was coming, and as a Man He had prepared Himself in prayer to receive it. He wasn't trying to avoid it. He was willing to be treated this way, for He knew that all that He was suffering, and all that He would suffer, would be so that we would not perish, but have eternal life. His death would be His voluntarily. He would give Himself up voluntarily to suffer in our place. He would not be driven to the cross, or forced to it, but He would freely embrace all of these experiences which would lead Him in the end to go to the cross, at the exact time that the Father had ordained that it would take place.

He knew that He must pass through many trials, temptations, and oppositions. He knew that He must be condemned by the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees. But in His dying He knew that He would accomplish the redemption of all of God's elect people. By His going away to His death He would, through His being raised from the dead, open the way to heaven as the triumphant Savior and King of glory. He would say to the thief on the cross – "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 43) Jesus when He died was going away to heaven, not descending into hell. He would descend into hell when He was on the cross suffering. But when that was complete, and He died, He went immediately to heaven. This is why he said to those unbelieving Jews who were following Him around trying to make a fool out of Him – "I am going away and you will seek Me, and you will die in your sin." "Where I go you cannot come." Truly, He pitied them. He knew that they were being critical of Him because He was not what they would have wanted Him to be; a self-righteous Pharisee like they were. They felt that He should have to prove something to them; that He should acknowledge their whole system of works-righteousness. He knew that their self-righteous and critical thoughts of Him came from their pride in themselves, and their unbelief in relation to God's true way of doing things; that is, that a man ought to be humble, not seeing himself as great and wise in his own eyes.

Let me assure you according to God's word, You will indeed find Jesus, if you seek for Him with all your heart; that is, from a heart humbled by your own sinfulness, and realizing that you need a Savior. These men were seeking to try to disprove Jesus' qualifications to be their Messiah, the One who had been sent to them from God. They were seeking their Messiah, not believing that Jesus was He, actually trying to disprove that He was their Messiah! A good number of those who were seeking Jesus at this point were seeking Him for all the wrong reasons; seeking to kill Him because they knew that He would not submit to their false understanding of righteousness.

The reason that they would die in their sins was because they were trusting in their own fallen and fallible discernment. And they were trusting in their own righteousness as fallen but religious men. They were trying to prove something which was not true about themselves; that they were righteous, when all the while, they were full of hate toward Jesus; full of hypocrisy in pursuing their own outward righteousness. They were full of self-deception in their not dealing with their heart sins of being unjust, and unmerciful, and unkind towards Him. They were unfaithful to God in the attitudes of their hearts. Jesus knew that they did not want to repent of these sins; that they were set in them, and they would hold to them, no matter how much the Holy Spirit strove with them over them. This was why He said to them that they would eventually seek for Him, but they would die in the sins. They wanted God to send them their Messiah, but they did not know Him when He was standing right in front of them.

What does it mean to die in your sins? It means to die without your sins being atoned for by Christ. To atone is to make satisfaction for sins in the sight of the Holy God. You must have a someone to redeem you, to buy you back from the state in sin that you are in. And then, the One redeeming you must satisfy the justice of God which is set against you for those sins. When you believe in Jesus Christ, you believe in a Strong Redeemer. God looked at all of the perfection of Christ's obedience, and His sufferings on your behalf, and He then forgives your sins and covers your sins so that they will not be punished by Him eternally; they will not be remembered by Him, and they will not be brought up to punish you for them, either when you die, or when you stand

before God in the Last Judgment. God clothes you in Christ's righteousness when you believe in Him.

But the Lord Jesus knew that these men would die in their sins because they would not believe in Him, that He was their Messiah, the One sent by God to die for sinners. So, you see, either you must die for your sins eternally, because you cannot pay the debt that you owe to God for them. You cannot make up for the dishonor that you have brought upon His holy name, or upon yourself as well. Your sins are too many, and the dye of sin is too deep for you to wash it out yourself. If you do not believe that the Lord Jesus is the only Savior of sinners, and place all of your trust in Him, you will die in your sins. And if you die in your sins, you will be punished forever in hell, because you have not seen yourself as a great enough sinner in the sight of God to really want to deal with your sins in the manner which God has prescribed. You think that you are good enough as you are, to enter heaven.

But notice that Jesus made a great distinction between Himself and these self-righteous Jews. He said to them in verse 23 – "You are from beneath; I am from above." "You are of this world; I am not of this world." "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." Here the Lord Jesus tells us distinctly why He is unique among men and that is why we must believe in Him, and not think to be saved by any other. It is because He is from above, and we all are from beneath. He means that He alone, of all men, came from heaven. No other person who has ever lived has come from heaven above to this earth. But the Lord Jesus who is of two natures in His one Blessed Person did. God the Son always was with the Father from all eternity past, and in the Incarnation He took to Himself a true human nature and a body which God the Spirit prepared for Him in Mary's womb, and He became the God-Man in His entrance into this world.

This is why He could say that He was going away. Although He would die as a Man upon the cross, the Deity never died. Jesus would simply die as a Man and His spirit would go away to heaven. The day that He died He would pass through the heavens, and in victory He would enter heaven itself to appear before God there, on our behalf. No other man could say such a thing as this; no other man could do it. This is why we must glory in Christ and His cross. It was His going away. It was going His way, as it says in the King James. It was His beginning the process of going to prepare a place for us, that where He is, we can be, if we will believe in Him. See the importance of faith in Christ alone. See the importance of your not disqualifying His credentials to be your Savior and Lord. Neither Buddha nor Mohammed, nor Krishna, nor any other false prophet or teacher can make such claims, and thus all of the other religions of the world must fall before this truth; that Jesus is from above and we are from beneath. But He came from above for our sakes, so that we might someday also go away to be with Him forever.

**2<sup>nd</sup> - You should believe that the Lord Jesus always spoke from the Father, and did nothing from Himself.** (verses 25-27)

"Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" "And Jesus said to them, 'Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.'" "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him." "They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father." The unbelieving Jews after hearing Jesus authoritatively declare to them that they would die in their sins, if they did not believe in Him being their Messiah; they say to Him – 'Who are You?'. And He replies, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning"; that is, from the beginning of His earthly ministry. Let us understand that if we want Jesus to be our Savior, and if we believe in Him as our Lord, that He has many things to say and to judge concerning us. They are things which we very much need to hear. "I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him", Jesus says to them. He speaks these things not only to them, but to us today as well.

When you and I say that we believe in Jesus, we should understand that faith involves submission to His word and the Triune God's speaking to us through it. The Lord Jesus is the only

Man who has the right to say and to judge concerning you, because He perfectly represents God the Father in His judgments. Christ's submission to the Father's decretive will, His moral will in His law, and His providential will in ordaining all things that He would say and do while He was living here upon the earth, this should assure us that it is right to believe in Him and follow Him in whatever He says to us in His word; to look to Him in every situation in our lives, because He is God as well as Man; and as such, He always spoke the truth. And the Father confirmed that all that Jesus said was true and was coming from Him, the Father, as its source. And this included all the details of the truth being conveyed. Truth was thus established by these two extraordinary witnesses – the Father and the Son.

Let me make this application: We need to think often about the Divine Trinity, my brethren. We need to take to heart, what it says in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of our 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. It says this: "In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him."

It ought to comfort us, brethren, that we have in the Divine Trinity, the Father who orders all things after the counsel of His will, for our good, as we trust in Him. We have in the Lord Jesus, a Divine Person who as God, has the whole divine essence, and yet He is also a Man who suffered being tempted and afflicted, even as we are at points, and yet He had no sin. And we have the Holy Spirit, who has been sent into our hearts to abide there forever, to impart the grace of Christ to us, so that we will be comforted; so that we will be able to give thanks in all situations, so that we will be able to have the power to overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. I am saying that this ought to comfort us greatly, to realize that we can depend upon our God in every situation of life; knowing that He does indeed do all things well, whether we are suffering opposition from the enemies of the Lord, or whether we are rejoicing in the fellowship that we have with Him and with the brethren in our church.

Since this passage focuses so much on the relationship between the Father and the Son, let us think about it for a moment longer. God the Father planned from all eternity to send His Son into the world. He has been, and He is, faithful and true to all of His promises concerning the mission of His Son; that His only-begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, would fulfill all righteousness and purchase at the cost of His infinitely precious life, the most definite salvation for sinners who are weary of sin, and heavy laden by it. The atonement that He rendered to God secured a most definite application to all the persons whom the Father chose from before the foundation of the world. The great things of this salvation; how the Lord Jesus would engage to become our surety and suffer on our behalf, were hidden from the eyes of those who were wise and prudent in their own eyes.

Jesus says in Matthew 11: 25 – "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." "All things have been delivered to Me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father." "Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son will to reveal Him" "Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." And so we see here, the graciousness of the Father and the Son to those who are not wise in their own eyes, but who are babes in regard to that evil way of thinking, that they are wise in their own eyes. He shall most definitely save those who are babes from their sins; all who will come to Christ.

And so too, God the Father is also faithful to His threatenings; to bring down vengeance on those who will not believe in His Son, and who reject Him in their foolish and wicked unbelief. He

said in Psalm 110, verse 1 – “Sit at My hand, My Son, until I make all of Your enemies a footstool for Your feet. It was the Father’s plan that the Lord Jesus would go away into heaven, after His resurrection from the dead, after showing Himself by many proofs to His disciples; The Father ordained that this glorious Person, His Son, would sit at His right hand, as a glorious King over all the earth, and the only Mediator between God and man. But in Psalm 2, verse 10, it says – “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth.” “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” “Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”

You see, it was the Father who ordained that the Son who sit at His right hand all during this whole Church age. It was the Father’s love and care over our lives that He would have it that the Lord Jesus would ever live to make intercession for us. This was for our comfort. For Christ’s intercession means, that whatever sins and mistakes that you as a believer fall into, the Divine Trinity is wise enough, They as Persons together are holy enough, They are righteous enough, they are merciful enough, they are compassionate enough, and they are lovingly powerful enough, to lead us and to guide us into every aspect of truth that we need to learn. Christ said here that He had many things that He had to say and to judge concerning the unbelieving Jews. But let us apply it to ourselves, as believers, in this good way, that He will always watch over us, and teach us in a way that will always be for our ultimate good, and for His glory. Let this be for your comfort, dear Christian.

Our God gives this assurance to the person trusting in Him, in Psalm 32, verse 8, where He says – “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.” “Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.” “Many sorrows will be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him.” “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.”

**3<sup>rd</sup> – You should believe that Christ always did those things that pleased the Father, which things, you also should attempt to do, by His grace.** (verses 28-30)

Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.’ “And He who sent Me is with Me.” “The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” “As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.” Let us understand that Christ came into this world in order to do His Father’s will at every point. In Psalm 40, verses 6-8 Christ speaks prophetically of what He would come into the world to do. “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened.” “Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.” “Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.’ “I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.” This shows us how great Christ’s was, to come and in the place of sinners, do God’s will. He knew that the sacrifice of bulls and goats and rams and lambs was not going to fulfill the ceremonial and moral law of God. The Father would not be satisfied with the picture of sacrifice; He would only be satisfied with the reality of a perfection sinless sacrifice that would merit salvation for all persons believing in Him.

It would only be when Christ came into the world that a perfect righteousness and a sacrificial death would be offered before God, and to God, which would be acceptable and meritorious on behalf of sinners, so that they could be forgiven and set free from the law of sin and death in their members. Christ’s ears had been opened to this truth. His Father had not only given Him the ability to know exactly what He should do to fulfill His Father’s holy law, but also by the Holy Spirit, who was given to Him without measure, He was enabled to exercise a holy confidence in the Father all during the time of His earthly ministry, all the way to the cross. Because in John 12: 32 Jesus, who was on the verge of going to the cross, said this – “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all peoples to Myself.” The word “peoples” or “men” is not in the original Greek manuscripts. He is saying He would draw all to Himself; all those whom the Father had given to

Him. And so this is how we should think about these things of the design and the extent of the atonement: We need to see that redemption is particular. Christ would lay down His life for many sinners, but not for those who would dishonor the Holy Spirit and attribute to Him the works of the Devil. But He would die for all those who would listen and spiritually hear His word, and believe in the Father who sent Him, those who would understand what He meant when He said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things." Every sinner trusting in Jesus knows that it was their sins which brought Jesus to the cross, and for which He was willing to die.

The Father was with the Lord Jesus, and He did not leave Him alone during His ministry and in His journey through life to the cross. And the reason for this was, that as a Man, He was always doing those things that pleased the Father. Let us understand, in closing this message that this is also why the Lord Jesus died for us; not only that our sins would be forgiven and that we would be accepted in God's sight, but that we might be transformed more and more into the image of Christ. And the way that this will take place is when we see what God has called us to, in our living our Christian life. It is so that we will learn by Christ's grace to always do those things which are pleasing to Him. Is this what you desire, dear Christian, more than anything else, to be pleasing to the Father? Then you will come to know that same kind of confidence that Christ had in His faithful obedience to the Father.

My friends, never lower the standard of perfection to which you are called. God has not called you to make excuses for an incomplete obedience. But He will bless you more and more with the ability to make progress in holiness when you deliberately move away from loving the world and the things of the world, when you deliberately go about to put sin to death in your heart when you find it there; when you deliberately pray to be perfect even as Your heavenly Father is perfect. What I am talking about now is not a fleshly confidence, but it is a Spirit-led confidence. It is the confidence which comes from counting all things loss for Christ.

Listen to how Paul words it in Philippians 3: 8-16. "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." "Therefore let us, as many as are mature, (as many as are perfect, it says in the King James) have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you." "Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind."

Brethren, let us be of the same mind, about this subject of Christian Perfection. We are not perfect at any time in our living our life to God, in terms of absolute perfection, but it is our constant goal to be like Christ. It should be our stated aim. Let us not make excuses for any sinful impulse that we might find in our heart, or make excuses for bad or sinful behavior, based upon the strength of our flesh, but let us pursue Perfection as we see it in the life of the Lord Jesus, with all the strength which His Spirit supplies.

